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Cession of American Territory

A Pacific Coast Protest Against the Yielding by the United States of any Portion of Alaska to the Dominion of Canada.

IN 1825 the Government of Russia and Great Britain by clear and formal treaty determined the intervening line between their respective possessions on the continent of North America. Great Britain then acknowledged the right of Russia to all of the Pacific Coast north of 54-40 and Portland canal, and west of the summits of the range of mountains nearest to the coast. If such mountains were far from the shore, then the line was to be drawn ten marine leagues from the ocean. During the following forty-two years Russia remained in undisputed ownership of all that region, known then as Russian America, and until, in 1867, her title thereto was passed to the United States for $7,000,000. At that time the white inhabitants numbered about one thousand, all of whom, save a few engaged in the fur trade, were reliant upon the Russian government for their means of living. There were no fisheries, no manufactures, no mining, no farming, no business and relations with any other country and people than Russia and the Russians.

With the advent of the Americans came a change. Steamers began to run there from California, Oregon and Washington ports; people of the world were in-

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vited to take advantage of the opportunities on every hand; military and naval protection was given against the savages of the land; mail services were established, and Government explorations undertaken; the fur seal fishery employed scores of

Alaska Steamers at a Seattle (Schwabacher's) Wharf.

vessels and hundreds of men, and became worth millions of dollars; salmon were found off the coast, and great fisheries were established, employing other hundreds

of men, who put up now 25,000,000 to 40,000,000 one-pound cans of fish each summer for the Australian, European and American markets; quartz were found, mines were opened, and mills built, one of them, with 880 stamps, being the largest in the world; placers were also found, and from the two sources upwards of $5,000,000 of gold were obtained during the year 1898. Two hundred and fifty American steamers were engaged in the Alaska trade last year, and an average of more than one vessel a day departed from Seattle alone for ports in that territory. Sawmills have been started there, some farming done, a halibut fishery begun, and in the summer a great number of tourists go to those interesting shores. All this development of resources has involved the opening of the country, the civilizing of the natives, and the establishment there of a large population of American citizens, with two cities of at least 3000 inhabitants each, and many smaller towns. In these cities are daily newspapers, electric lights, telephones, municipal governments and now the steam car and telegraph. In the whole territory are over 30,000 citizens of our country, an average gain since 1867 of one thousand per annum. With its practically untouched timber, its coal, its petroleum, codfish, whale, furbearing animals, etc., added to its seal, salmon, gold and other resources, as attractions, there is reason to believe that Alaska with its half million square miles of territory will support comfortably a half million people a half century hence. It is no Greenland, but rather a Sweden and Norway, and, like those countries, will be a great factor in the commerce of the world.

While Russia held the country Great Britain apparently cared nothing for

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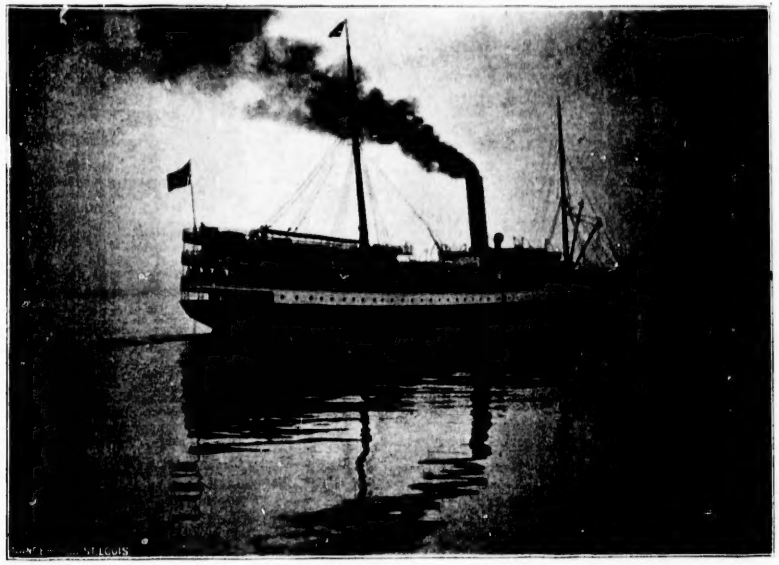
it. Beyond a fur trading privilege no attempt was made to avail of it. Taken during the Crimean war it was cheerfully relinquished at the close as of no value. Not until the citizens of the United States showed its worth in fish, in timber, in gold and in trade did the Britons and Canadians evince interest in and desire for it. Then by insidious methods attempts began to fix a claim upon the country. The old maps were discarded, and new maps issued upon which the boundary line began further north and was located nearer the sea, taking into the Dominion a considerable area of the best portion of southeastern Alaska. The next step was to get the newspapers to publish the claim, and to fix it in the public mind as a proper and regular thing contemplated even by the treaty makers of 1825. From this it was easy to cause a contention, first local and then international, in consequence of which their claim could be placed before the British-American Joint High Commission, where nothing could be lost, but where something might be gained in the making of concessions and exchanges common to such bodies. It was a clever scheme but one without honesty, justice or merit.

Farewell to an Alaska Steamer.

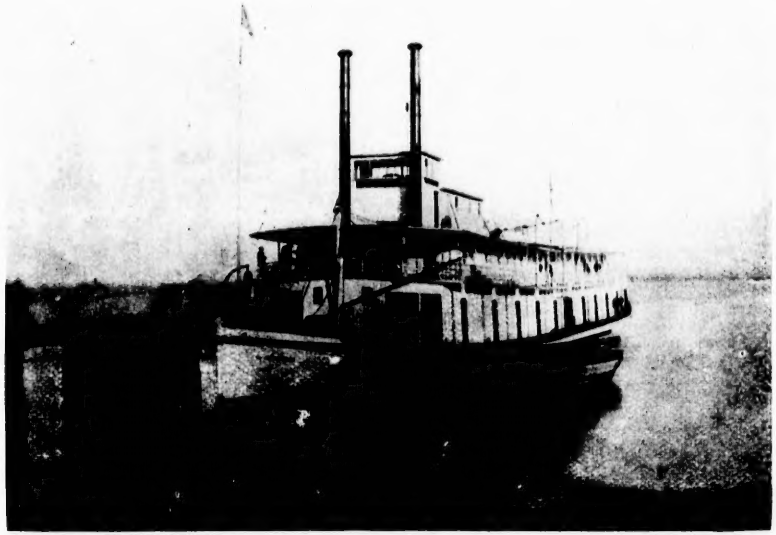
In accordance with this plan it is now said that the Canadians are to have a portion of Alaska. This portion will include the head of Lynn Canal, made world



Steamer Queen Bound For Alaska.

famous during the past two years by the rush of 50,000 gold miners to the Klon-

dike. It will wholly include the town of Dyea, with its thousand inhabitants, its aerial tramway and its U. S. military garrison. It will also include one-half the



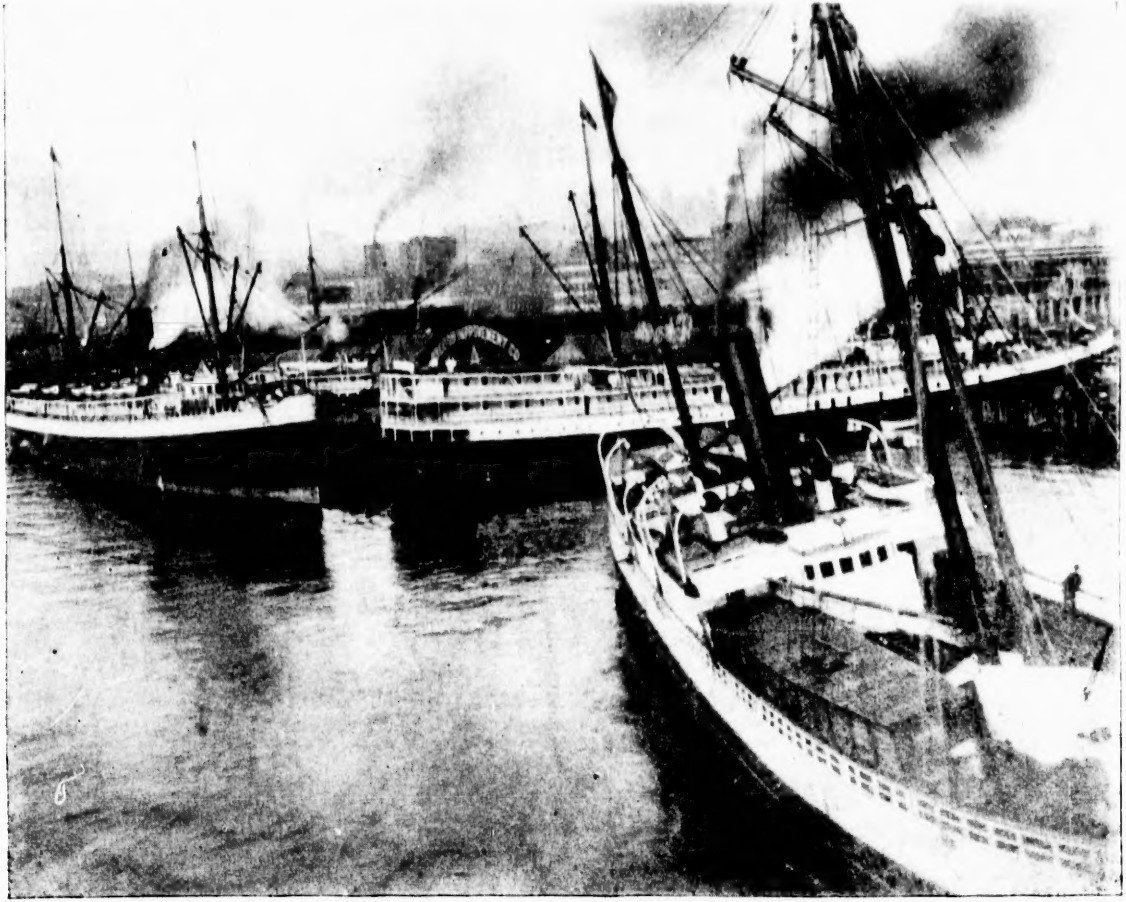
An Alaska River Steamer.

city of Skagway, with fifteen hundred or more inhabitants, its twenty miles of American built railway, its wharves, trade and growing importance. In taking

these places it will transfer from the United States to a foreign power the sole and absolute control of intercourse with the great interior, in which is involved a traffic of enormous proportions and of great worth. It will injure every citizen of the United States from San Diego to Sitka, and will humiliate the country from ocean to ocean and end to end. For the first time in our history the flag will be hauled down, and the land over which it long had floated will be given away, sold or surrendered. This, too, without considering the wishes, wants or rights of the people most affected; and this, too, for either no consideration at all or for a consideration of trifling character. That such an act can be perpetrated in these days of national glory, of patriotism and expansion, is incredible. Against its commission the protests of the people should avail, and that of the Seattle Chamber of Commerce is here and now earnestly and respectfully presented.

E. O. GRAVES,
J. J. McGILVRA,
WILL H. PARRY,
ANDREW KNOX,
THOS. W. PROSCH,
Committee.

Seattle, February, 1899.



Alaska Steamers at a Seattle (O. I. Co's.) Wharf.

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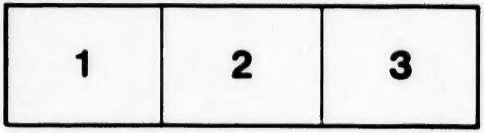

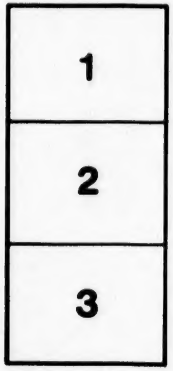

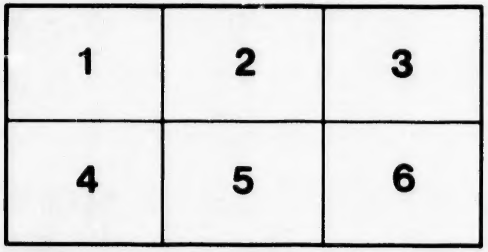

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